The Highlander

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INSIDE: LUNG SCREENING AND MAMMOGRAPHY AT HHHS PAGE 3 **FREE**

Highlanders urged to get fire-ready

By Adam Frisk
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

As the County begins to enter the 2026 fire season, County and provincial officials are calling for a united front against the increasing threat of wildfires in the region.

During a seminar at Sir Sam's Ski/Ride on Saturday (May 2), the Coalition of Haliburton Property Owners Associations (CHA) and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry said that protecting the landscape of the Highlands takes both individual effort and collective community action.

CHA board chair Paul MacInnes said lake and property associations play an important role when combating wildfires and climate change.

"The key for lake associations and property owners' associations is for them to share information around the lake on what individual property owners can do to protect not only their own dwelling but their neighbours as well," MacInnes told *The Highlander*. "It's a lot of very simple things."

During the seminar, MNRF fire advisor Ken Cox highlighted the impacts of wildfires in Ontario and how property owners can learn from the FireSmart program to protect their homes and cottages. A primary concern for Haliburton residents is the difficulty of maintaining the program's recommended 30-metre "extended zone" of fire protection on crowded lakefront properties.

Cox said that FireSmart is a "nice to do," but not necessarily a "have to do," explaining that residents should focus on the immediate area around their house or cottage to help mitigate structure loss as a result of a wildfire.

"If you only do the removal of pine needles or leaves or dead grasses right adjacent to the home itself or under the decks... you're saving yourself about 90 per cent of the time statistically," Cox said.

The fire advisor explained that property owners should start at the structure and work outward toward the property line, removing the natural forest debris, noting that most yards already provide a natural buffer from the tree line.

Continued **'Cottage'** on page 2

All fired up

Dysart et al fire chief, Dan Chumbley, helps Carson Payne, 7, use a hand-pump fire hose during first responders day May 1. See more coverage on page 14.
Photo by Adam Frisk.

Highlander news

Left: Deborah Renda wipe her eyes as she and husband, Matt Renda, were joined by Minden Hills mayor Bob Carter, councillors Shirley Johannessen, Bob Sisson, Lisa Schell, Pam Sayne and Ivan Ingram at the AED unveiling. Right: Matt and Deb Renda donated the public access defibrillator. *Photo by Lisa Gervais.*

Parents honoured in unveiling of defib

By Lisa Gervais

Deborah Renda wiped tears from her eyes as she and husband, Matt, were on hand April 30 for the official unveiling of a new public access automated external defibrillator (AED) in downtown Minden.

The unit was donated in memory of Deborah's parents, Don and Diane Banks.

Deborah told *The Highlander* her mom suffered a heart attack six years ago and lived with complications until her death a year ago. Matt's dad also had cardiac issues.

Deborah added, as owners of Boshkung Brewing, they, "happened upon Minden. We had no intention of moving here, but I think things fall into place for a reason. My dad never got to experience this beautiful town, as he died seven years ago from cancer. My mom lived with us for six years, and she got to experience everything that this town has to offer. If we can give back in some way and have my parents' legacy be a small part of that, that's super special to me."

The Rendas were joined by Minden Hills councillors and staff, EMS personnel, and members of the public at the unveiling.

Mayor Bob Carter acknowledged the Rendas' "generous contribution."

He said, "I actually have been present when one of these was put into use to save somebody's life, so I know how important these units are."

He added the downtown location, in the kiosk across from the post office, is ideal "for the health and safety of everybody in this area."

Matt spoke to his dad having had multiple heart attacks, and the fact the Minden community is aging.

"If there is, God forbid, a heart attack in town, there's immediate access to a life-saving device. We hope it never gets used, but if it does, we know it will be used in a great way."

Matt said they have the same model of AED at the brewery and they are easy to use.

EMS reminded people to ring 911 in emergencies.

Cottage association encourages good septic health

Continued from page 1

"If you have a shoreline bylaw, for example, or vegetation management, I would recommend folks just look at the intermediate zone, and not to worry about the shoreline so much because of the exact same parameters," Cox said. "Instead of the forest being all throughout that side of the home, you've got a lake, and a fire is not going to come across the lake to you."

MacInnes warned that the wildfire threat extends beyond property damage, noting the large environmental impact wildfire smoke has on our lakes and rivers.

"As climate change continues to bite harder and harder, this is going to be a bigger and bigger problem," the CHA board chair said. "It's pretty serious when your cottage burns down, your home burns down. But it's also serious for the health of the lake."

MacInnes urged the community to take action to protect the health of our lakes, with proper septic maintenance, shoreline renaturalization, and combating invasive species in the water basin.

"We need to encourage them to take the simple steps that they need to take. Keeping their septic system healthy, that's the number one polluter of our lakes. Renaturalizing the shoreline where we've lost the natural shoreline. And keeping invasive species out," he said. "It sounds simple, but it's not."

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry fire advisor Ken Cox speaks at Sir Sam's. *Photo by Adam Frisk.*

Highlander news

Gail Kennedy (right), HHHS' director of diagnostic imaging, pictured with the hospital's radiation technologists. *Photo submitted.*

Haliburton adds lung screening program

By Mike Baker

Haliburton Highlands Health Services (HHHS) has added to its growing portfolio of diagnostics programs, partnering with Lakeridge Health to bring the Ontario Lung Screening Program (OLSP) to the Haliburton hospital.

The initiative is aimed for seniors between the age of 55 and 80 who have smoked cigarettes or other tobacco products, such as cigars and pipes, every day for at least 20 years and have coverage through the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP).

Gail Kennedy, integrated director of diagnostic imaging at HHHS and Lindsay's Ross Memorial Hospital, said the Haliburton site was approved this week.

"Bringing the OLPS to HHHS will improve access to early lung cancer detection for a rural, high-risk population. It will reduce the need for patients to travel to larger centres, support earlier diagnosis and better outcomes, and promote more equitable access to preventive care," Kennedy said.

The screenings will be done using the new CT device HHHS purchased in 2024. Kennedy estimates 50 to 75 patients will be seen through the rest of 2026, with capacity to expand as needed in future years.

Lakeridge Health in Oshawa is the hub site for the OLPS. Kennedy said a staffer from that hospital completes a risk assessment with the patient, explains the process, books the CT and schedules follow-up appointments. The tests will be conducted by HHHS' existing medical radiation technologist team.

She said people can be referred to the program by their family doctor or call 1-866-338-1778 ext. 34449 themselves to check if they're eligible.

"Not everyone who is referred will be eligible. The risk assessment with the navigator [at Lakeridge Health] will confirm who is eligible for screening," Kennedy said. "The risk assessment asks about personal health history, family history of lung cancer, as well as other questions [about] education, smoking history etc."

Asked about how long people can expect to wait between referral, assessment and testing, Kennedy said that will be volume dependent and managed by staff in Oshawa.

Appointments will be scheduled Monday to Friday at 3:30 p.m., with Kennedy saying additional timeslots can be made available as demand increases.

To learn more about the program, visit checkforlungcancer.ca.

Mammography services expanded

A little over a year after bringing mammography services to Haliburton, HHHS announced last week testing is now open for bookings through the Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP). Before, mammograms were referral only.

The first test was carried out Feb. 18, 2025 – two weeks after the delivery of the $800,000 mammography device. HHHS received accreditation through the Canadian Association of Radiologists in August and was approved into the OBSP in March. Testing began April 27.

Kennedy said the program is for patients between the ages of 40 and 74 with no signs, symptoms or history of breast cancer. She said the OBSP staff track results and provide reminders for future appointments.

Initial screening is done in Haliburton, but if follow-up imaging is required via ultrasound or breast assessment, patients will be referred to Ross or the Peterborough Regional Health Centre.

Bookings can be made by patients directly by calling 705-457-1392 ext. 2381 or by visiting hhhs.ca/hospital/mychart.

"Openings are somewhat limited right now but should be opening more in the near future," Kennedy said.

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Highlander news

Minden Hills shares flood clean-up plans

By Lisa Gervais

Volunteers continue to help the township with clean-up efforts. *Photo by Lisa Gervais*.

The township of Minden Hills has released details on its community clean-up following recent flooding.

The municipality said residents can use sand from sandbags on their property. Empty sandbags can be disposed of with regular household waste, and are not recyclable. If you can't use the sand, you can bring sandbags to the curling club (50 Prentice St.) and place them in the drop off area on the pallets provided. In Irondale, sandbags can be deposited at the Irondale Community Centre (1004 Line Drive Rd.).

Roadside pick-up of sandbags started May 5. People are asked to move the sandbags to the roadside (not on the roadway). They can be placed at the curb on: Invergordon Avenue, Bobcaygeon Road, McKnight Drive, Anson Street, Orde Street, St. Germaine Street, Prince Street and Water Street. If you can't move the sandbags, or are outside of the areas, email flood2026@mindenhills.ca or call 705-286-1260 ext. 500.

"We will be working with community volunteers to assist residents in removing sandbags from their properties," the township said.

If your home or business was impacted and you have flood-damaged items and materials you need to dispose of at the Scotch Line landfill, the township has an application process to request relief from waste disposal fees. The program is intended for those who are not making a claim through insurance. Go to https://forms.mindenhills.ca/Application-forRelief-from-Waste-Disposal-Fees. Paper copies of the application will be available at waste facilities, the administrative office, and the S.G. Nesbitt Memorial Arena. Requests for extensions or exceptions can be emailed to flood2026@mindenhills.ca or call 705-286-1260 ext. 500.

The township will have a limited quantity of 50 clean up kits available, suitable for general household cleaning only, and not to be used for mould remediation. Kits will be available for pick-up at the Minden Community Centre (55 Parkside St.) upper level; available on a first come, first served basis. Pick-up dates and times are May 11, from 5-7 p.m., and May 12 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The township added Lakelands Public Health has important information related to flooding on their website https://www.lakelandsph.ca/health-topics/emergency-preparedness/flooding/.

The township has information sheets with details on the clean-up at www.mindenhills.ca/flooding2026.

Dysart et al coun. Pat Casey. *File.*

Dysart councillor blames province for budget challenges

By Mike Baker

Dysart et al coun. Pat Casey believes financial pressure felt within the County's four townships has more to do with continued downloading of necessary services from the Ontario government than local mismanagement.

Addressing County CAO Gary Dyke at Dysart's April 28 meeting, Casey asked if the province provided money to support social service, childcare, housing and health programming that have been handed down to the lower level.

Dyke, who had been presenting about a new governance and affordability study County council has commissioned, indicated they do but that it's rarely enough to cover the full cost of delivery.

"Traditionally when services are downloaded, some money may come with it but it's not enough for ongoing maintenance. It's like buying a brand-new truck. You might have enough money for the truck, but you can't afford new tires or brakes when they're needed. We're kind of in that position right now," Dyke said.

The CAO said that's why the County review is so important.

"We need to look at how we're spending every dollar right now to ensure we can augment and support… those gaps we have to fill," Dyke said.

The County currently pays the City of Kawartha Lakes (CKL) around $3 million for childcare, housing and social services, with CKL chosen by the province to act as service manager for the region. That's one of the areas the County has seen the biggest increase in costs, Dyke said, with some programs up anywhere from 20 to 40 per cent in recent years.

With policing costs also climbing – capped at 11 per cent the past two years – Dyke said all councils in the County have had to make some difficult decisions.

"You're being forced into taking extraordinary steps to mitigate the tax rate increase – by reducing or deferring capital money, which moves the ball down the road," Dyke said.

Casey said Dysart is feeling the impact.

"We have 20 bridges coming up and we're looking at our infrastructure gaps and wondering how we're going to handle this. So many costs have been downloaded on us with no clear way to cover the gap, unless we drastically increase taxes," Casey said.

Upping the local levy is problematic, too, Dyke said considering the impact will be borne largely by residential ratepayers. He estimated about 98 per cent of the local tax base is residential.

He told Dysart the study will be completed by late July and presented to County council in August. There won't be any recommendations for changes, with Dyke saying that will fall to the next term of council. The 2026 municipal election will take place Oct. 26.

"This is not designed to be critical of the manner services are being provided at the County or local level, it's an economic study making sure we're doing everything we can to ensure we invest the money we are collecting from ratepayers is being spent in the most efficient and effective way possible," Dyke said.

Plenty of action in Minden as nominations open

Just seven days into the nomination period for the Oct. 26 municipal election, and Minden Hills already has three contenders for mayor.

Current councillors, Pam Sayne and Tammy McKelvey, will be vying for council's top job with Pat Kitcheman also filing nomination papers in the past week.

McKelvey is wrapping up her first term as councillor-at-large in the township, while Sayne is putting an end to a third term. Kitcheman is a life long resident and small business owner.

Meanwhile, Lisa Schell is again nominating for the post of deputy mayor. This would be her sixth term, having first been elected in 2006.

Former councillor, Ron Nesbitt, has filed his papers for councillor-at-large. Shirley Johannessen is seeing re-election in ward one and Stephen Hertel will again run for ward two.

Nominations are open until 2 p.m. Aug. 21, with an Oct. 10-26 voting period.

On May 5, there was a candidate information session at the Haliburton Legion for prospective nominees in Algonquin Highlands, Dysart et al, Highlands East and Minden Hills.

Meanwhile, the Haliburton Highlands Healthy Democracy Project is presenting its final 'voices and votes' session, Understanding Campaigns: How Success Happens. It will feature Lauren Hunter, a seasoned campaign strategist of more than 20 municipal, provincial, and federal campaigns, sharing the building blocks of a successful campaign, whether for elected office or for a cause people care about, along with practical tips and tools. It will take place on Monday, May 11 from 7- 8:30 p.m. at the Stanhope Fire Fighters Community Hall in Algonquin Highlands. *(Lisa Gervais)*

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Highlander news

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More testing to be done at AH landfills

By Mike Baker

Water samples from new locations at the Maple Lake waste disposal site will be analyzed this year to help Algonquin Highlands township understand the extent of landfill impacts to surface water at the site.

Environmental manager Melissa Murray said this was one of the recommendations engineering firm, Cambium Inc., made in its 2025 annual monitoring report, submitted to the township in February.

"We have met one of the trigger mechanisms in place as part of the monitoring process. There are different limits set when a site is developed… to ensure appropriate actions are taken in response to any potential degradation of environmental quality beyond acceptable limits," Murray said.

According to Cambium, there is an east-west groundwater divide along the southern edge of the waste mound at Maple Lake, with water flowing north and south underground from the divide.

"Discharge to surface is possible for portions of the year, particularly in the autumn… results in 2025 indicated a dilute leachate plume extended to the north and south from the waste mound, decreasing in concentration within a short distance from the mound," the Cambium report reads.

Murray said the plan for Maple Lake assumes groundwater isn't discharging to the surface, hence the need for more testing. She said two new drive-point monitors will be installed, costing around $2,500.

"These aren't dug wells, they're points that are inserted into the ground to give an idea of the level of water and direction water is travelling underground," Murray said. "This will allow us to look at the two locations, north and south of the site, to see if groundwater is coming up to the surface – which is possible."

Cambium said there were elevated concentrations of contaminants in surface water tested at Maple Lake last year, though non-waste sources such as road salt and saturated organic soils were the primary influencers. They said there's no indication of any adverse impacts to down-gradient groundwater users off-site.

Murray said the township has never mapped out where the watercourse that flows under the landfill goes, noting the additional testing will help "see where the surface water is and whether we have to look at future [permanent] sampling… or if there's a waterbody that requires monitoring."

The engineer also recommended the removal of three surface water monitoring points at the old landfill site at Oxtongue Lake, south of Hwy. 60, that had been in place for 10 years.

"Data collected since 2015 indicates stable water quality at these locations and that the historical landfill has not adversely impacted the nearby unevaluated wetland," Murray said

Deputy mayor Jennifer Dailloux asked

Recycling boxes at the Maple Lake transfer station. *Photo courtesy of Algonquin Highlands.*

if there was any benefit in continuing to monitor the sites to ensure issues don't arise in the future, but Murray said it would be an unnecessary cost.

"Landfill waste becomes more stable over time… leachate and other impacts don't increase if there's no continued landfilling [which there isn't in that area]," Murray said, highlighting the Dorset transfer station as another area the township could scale back as "it hasn't been an active landfill for some time."

By the numbers

Vehicle counts at Maple Lake increased more than five per cent last year, to 31,769 in 2025 versus 30,147 in 2024, while the number of garbage bags collected went up almost 11 per cent, to 49,797 from 44,927. That accounted to 380 tonnes of waste being landfilled, up from 368 tonnes in 2024.

Murray estimated the landfill has another 50 years of life left, with an anticipated closure date of 2075.

The site also collected 202.59 tonnes of blue box recyclables, 10.75 tonnes of electronics, 84.66 tonnes of scrap metal, 1.03 tonnes of household batteries and 79 CFC appliances.

Oxtongue Lake saw a slight decrease in usage in 2025. Vehicle counts dropped to 4,220 from 4,352 (3.03 per cent) and the number of garbage bags collected fell from 5,555 to 5,465 (1.62 per cent). Murray said that amounted to around 40 tonnes of residential waste.

The site also collected 27.65 tonnes of blue box materials and 5.67 tonnes of scrap metal.

There was nothing to report at the McClintock Lagoon, with Murray saying it's been two years since anyone utilized the facility.

"That's up to the haulers in the area to decide what facilities they want to use. We do have an obligation to keep the site available," Murray said. "It's still being monitored, it's still available. We keep everything up and running just in case and our monitoring shows we're not seeing any impacts on the surface water around Fletcher Bay and Harvey Lake Creek, which is always a good thing."

Megan and Cutis Barker at their Algonquin Highlands home. *Photo by Lisa Gervais.*

Raising $120K for fight against cancer

By Lisa Gervais

As he attends a calendar-full of appointments, stretched over days, weeks and months of uncertainty, Carnarvon's Curtis Barker does not have much control over what is happening to his body. He is dealing with a rare bile duct cancer, related complications, and liver disease.

But on this day, the sun is shining. He puts out the patio furniture. It's exhausting but preferable to sitting around doing nothing.

Curtis said he stays sane by keeping as active as his body allows.

You may know Curtis; and you may have seen, or even contributed to, the April GoFundMe campaign for he and wife, Megan, and their two young children. They have raised just shy of $120,000 of an original $100,000 goal.

The main objective was to fund 10 cycles of a drug called Enhertu, a targeted cancer treatment for Curtis not covered by OHIP or private insurance. Each cycle costs $10,000

The family's life changed in September 2024 with the stage four Cholangiocarcinoma (bile duct cancer) diagnosis. Curtis stopped working. He underwent a Whipple surgery, and while Megan's private insurance covers the essential daily medications required afterward, the road since then has been incredibly difficult.

Curtis has endured first-line chemotherapy and immunotherapy, followed by second-line chemotherapy, and radiation. Along the way, he has faced multiple hospitalizations, including pneumonia, a blood infection, influenza A, and colitis. The disease has progressed, spreading to his liver, lymph nodes, and spine. He is undergoing radiation for pain management, as even strong medications are no longer enough.

At Princess Margaret Hospital, testing revealed that Curtis's tumor is HER2 3+ positive — opening the door to a promising drug called Enhertu.

He got his first dose April 20 at Peterborough Regional Health Centre, delivered through a port in his chest. He'll get the drug every three weeks. Money raised through the GoFundMe is paying for at least 10 treatments.

Curtis says he's had every side effect you can get from the drug – such as nausea, fatigue, and hair loss - but the two are hopeful as they've read Enhertu can be successful.

He and Megan cannot believe how much the community contributed to the campaign.

Curtis isn't much of a talker. He is at a loss for words when it comes to expressing his feelings about family, friends, acquaintances and complete strangers donating to the cause. "I have no words really. It's crazy all this money came in."

Megan is more expressive. "Curtis is a guy who's made a ton of connections." He is from the Barker family (of Barker Heating and Cooling).

After three or four treatments, they'll do more scans to see what impact the drug is having. Until then, it's the waiting game, which isn't easy for Curtis, who used to work 10 hours a day as a tradesman.

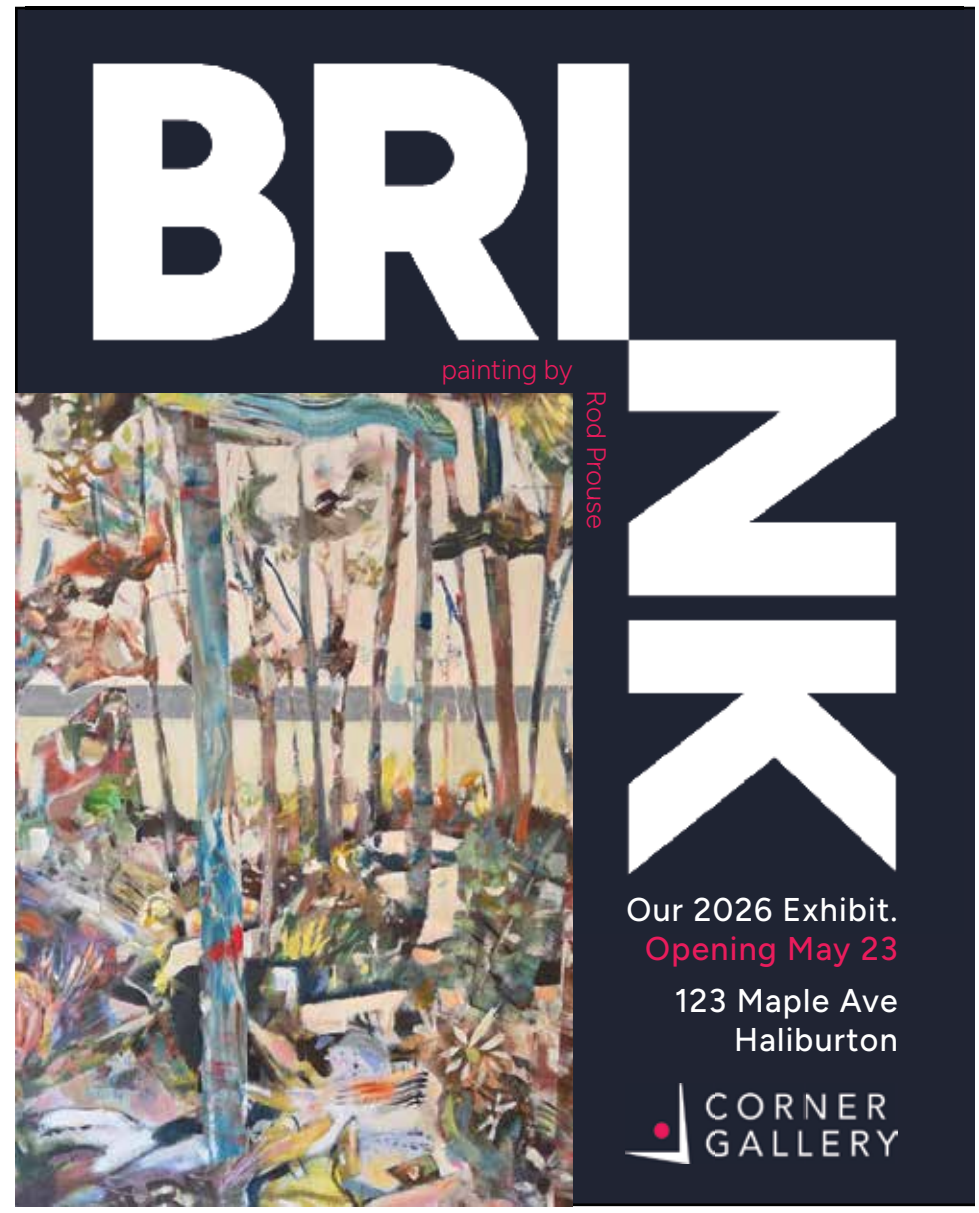
He said looking after his health "is pretty much a job" now. His other work is keeping busy.

"I just try to find stuff to do. You feel like you don't want to do anything, but you need to." The other day, when the walls were closing in, and he was feeling up to it, he took a drive to Minden. He has a lot of friends, who pop over to take his mind off things. It helps that Megan works from home. He has his daughters. Megan said the older one is aware dad is sick, but the other still too young.

Besides thanking the community for their generosity, Curtis also encouraged people to see their doctor if they think there is something going on. The couple had nothing but praise for their team of medical practitioners.

Only about 400 people are diagnosed with his type of cancer every year in Canada. Curtis asks, "how does this even happen? Why am I blessed? Why am I the guy? How come I can win this, but not the lottery?"

For now, plans are short-term. It's living day-to-day. Walking outside, Curtis shows some fruit trees he has planted around the property. There is new growth; a sign of spring and renewal.



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Editorial opinion

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To report on issues, people and events important to the community.

To reflect and promote pride in the culture, people and landscape of The Highlands.

To encourage Highlanders to believe in themselves, in our community, and in their power to make our place in the world better every day.

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Help is available

By Mike Baker

It's Mental Health Week in Ontario May 4 to 10.

I wasn't aware of that before my interview with Minden psychotherapist, Kelsey Sharpless, on Monday. We were speaking about the new eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) therapy Sharpless now offers at her local clinic when she clued me in. It got me thinking about my own mental health journey over the past few years.

As someone very much raised in a 'bottle it up and keep moving forward' environment, it took me a long time to come around on the benefits of therapy. On the importance of preserving one's mental health.

I was a naysayer for much of my life. Any time I was approached about the numerous ticks and tells that suggested something was off, I'd try to maintain my illusion – that I was fine when, really, I wasn't. I think it was the weirdness and isolating nature of the COVID-19 pandemic that caused me to admit defeat. By then, I'd pushed so much of my baggage down deep within that the internal measuring cup was at its breaking point.

My brain hit rock bottom some time in 2023. A cocktail of grief brought on by watching a loved one wither away from Alzheimer's, stress of becoming a first-time parent and the general madness of everyday life in the post-pandemic world brought me, figuratively, to my knees.

I got by for a time by self-medicating with cannabis, but that only added to my problems. It was therapy, in the end, that pulled me out of my hole.

It wasn't an immediate recovery. In fact, it's still ongoing. But the difference those 50-minute chats with a listening ear have had on my life has been incredible.

Listening to Sharpless explain EMDR therapy, it sounds like the kind of thing that would have really helped me when I was at my worst. Rather than forcing patients to speak at length about the problems plaguing them, Sharpless utilizes buzzwords, or headlines as she called them, to get people thinking about their chief concerns.

From there, movement takes over. It speaks to the senses – sight, touch and sound, helping to ground people's fight, flight or freeze reflex. It's not a new methodology, having been founded in the U.S. in 1987, but Sharpless is one of the first to bring EMDR to Haliburton County.

It's a needed expansion to the community's mental health services. People continue to struggle. According to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), one in five Canadians will experience a mental illness or episode this year. For those age 40 and older, CAMH estimates half of them have – or have had – a mental illness.

There are many supports available now for those struggling. Whether it's private operators like Sharpless or entities like the Canadian Mental Health Association, listening ears are no longer in short supply.

We're a lot better off now than we were 15-20 years ago, but there's still a way to go to completely eradicate the stigma surrounding mental health.

Suicide is another thing I used to have uneducated thoughts about. I once believed it was weak and selfish for someone to take their own life but, having been to the brink myself, I understand the thought process that takes people there.

CAMH estimates about 4,000 Canadians die by suicide every year – an average of almost 11 per day. It's indiscriminate, affecting people of all ages and backgrounds. In Ontario, the organization states four per cent of adults and 14 per cent of high school students report having seriously contemplated suicide in the past year.

Treatments are advancing every day. As a society, we're far more understanding of mental health challenges than ever before.

For anyone struggling, these next words are for you: you've suffered enough. There is a way out of the abyss, you just have to be willing to look for it. And then put in the work. Over and over again.

Before long, it'll stop feeling like you're pushing a boulder uphill. I'm not saying your problems will immediately melt away, but any step towards seeking help is a positive one. Your future self will thank you immeasurably for it.

HUMANS OF HALIBURTON HIGHLANDS

She always comes back

By Susan Tromanhauser

Shelley Brunt finds the drive to Haliburton County as captivating as her time at her Algonquin Highlands cottage.

From the moment she leaves her Toronto home, she begins collecting data, noticing subtle shifts in the landscape and wildlife along the way.

In winter, the University of Toronto microbiology professor can determine the thickness of the ice on Miners Bay by the distance of ice huts and fishermen's vehicles. In spring, her sightings of trumpet swans hopping on Balsam and Moore lakes help her predict when loons will arrive on Saskatchewan Lake.

Brunt's careful observations and love of nature began in childhood, spending summers at her cousin's cottage on Halls Lake. In the 1960s, the trip to cottage country took an hour longer than today, the highway winding and hugging the shores of the lakes. She remembers family stops in Kirkfield for Friday night picnics with a second stop in Minden for Kawartha Dairy ice cream. When rock blasting later created a more direct route, she saved a chunk of "gorgeous mica" from a cut — one of her earliest scientific keepsakes.

When Brunt's family rented a cottage on Twelve Mile Lake, she spent hours building a collection of finds from the lake bottom, using her beloved flippers, mask and snorkel purchased for $8 from her weekly 25 cent allowance, and lawnmowing and car wash savings.

Growing up outdoors, a career in science was perhaps inevitable. "I didn't pick my career, it picked me," she said. Brunt notes a scientist's work is rooted in observation and attention to subtle detail, but it was a teenage job as a swimming instructor that developed the teaching side of being a professor. "I enjoy watching someone else observe and learn."

In 2016, Brunt achieved a long-held goal: owning her own cottage. Her description of shallow Saskatchewan Lake reads like a field notebook — bass, trout, blue heron and snapping turtles among the features of her waterfront. She's seen firsthand how well loons parent their young and knows exactly where to successfully cast a fishing line.

A favourite memory is witnessing an eagle suddenly appear from the sky, diving and snatching a fish, only to soar away just as quickly. As she paddles her canoe throughout the neighbouring chain of Three Brothers and Hawk lakes, Brunt can identify the slight but meaningful variations of the individual lakes' vegetation and

Shelley Brunt. *Submitted.*

wildlife due to their unique water levels and shorelines.

In her decade of cottage ownership, Brunt has noted the effects of climate change; unpredictable weather, fluctuating water levels, and its concerning impact to shorelines and habitats. Last summer's unusually prolonged warm water temperatures leave her worried about the continued health of the fish in the lake.

Despite her love of Haliburton's nature, after a few days Brunt must return to the city — to friends and family, her treasured Mirvish production subscription, and her backyard urban gardens. But within a week, she always comes back: her passion for observing and analyzing the Highlands is never finished.

Editorial opinion

LETTERS

Thanks Riley

Dear editor,

I don't usually carry cash on me. I have found that cards are safer and more convenient for me.

Last week, I was in a convenience store in Carnarvon and took some hamburger buns to the cash register. Suddenly, my PIN of decades was not accepted and my three tries locked me out. They don't accept Visa, but the lovely young cashier suggested I use my Visa card at their ATM to get cash.

Impossible. My Visa PIN is also not accepted. I returned to the cashier and announced that I needed to cancel my order, whereupon the young lady produced her own debit card and tapped the machine before I could say anything. I was shocked and startled.

I started to protest, but the young lady, Riley, looked me in the eye and stated 'it's alright, sir. I feel sorry for you, sir'."

I want to publicly thank Riley, not just for her kind gesture, but also for helping to restore my faith in Canadians. I did repay Riley with a bonus and RBC has replaced both my defective cards.

James Brown
Algonquin Highlands

Positive hospital experience

Dear editor,

I had occasion Sunday, May 3, around 1 p.m. to visit the Haliburton emergency ward.

My experience far exceeded my expectations.

From the welcoming and pre-exam of the triage nurse to the excellence of the X-ray technician to the nurse drawing blood and doing ECG, and finally the expertise of the doctor present, certainly made my experience a good one.

Even living in small town, it's nice to see even under difficult circumstances, we still have these hard workers taking care of us behind the scenes.

Thank you to all associates of Haliburton hospital.

Dan Flude
Minden Hills

Unsatisfied taxpayer

Dear editor,

Having lived for 50 years or more in Highlands East, in what was Bicroft Township, I have seen many changes.

Also, many neglected things like a 50s water system and leaking sewer system here.

Our mayor has never done or even tried to improve these systems.

Yet, now that times are hurting people cost-wise... food... rent... gas ...taxes etc., he wants to burden us with the building of a new office at a tune of $9 million with no care of the cost.

Bill Stevens
Highlands East

Editor's note: Highlands East has not officially endorsed building a new town office and the decision will be made by the entire council, not just the mayor.

PHOTO OF THE WEEK

Sheila Richardson sent this photo, captioned "someone is getting a little frisky this morning at the bridge on Soyers Lake Road." The photo was taken by John Irwin of Grace Road.

Congratulations to your Highlander for wins at the Ontario Community Newspaper Association (OCNA) awards April 24.

First – best feature photo
Seconds – best editorial; education writing; and Environment Ontario
Thirds – best sports photo; best sports section
Honourable mentions - best health and wellness story; and best photo layout.

Highlander business

Firefighter heating it up Italian-style

By Adam Frisk
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Haliburton Pizza Pasta Plus owner and Highlands East firefighter Scott Muirhead pictured on May 1 in his shop. *Photo by Adam Frisk.*

A new culinary venture, Haliburton Pizza Pasta Plus, celebrated its grand opening last month that saw several menu items selling out.

The pizza joint, owned and operated by Highlands East firefighter Scott Muirhead, had a preliminary run on the weekend of April 25. Muirhead said the high volume of orders required a complete inventory restock ahead of the official opening.

"The feedback has been really great," he said. "We actually sold out a lot of things but we're back in stock and ready."

The business prides itself on the fresh production and local sourcing of ingredients and menu items. The dough, Alfredo sauce, spaghetti sauce, and pizza sauce are prepared in-house daily, starting at 8 a.m. The restaurant's popular Philly cheesesteak pizza utilizes slow-cooked ribeye sourced directly from a local, inspected farm, Muirhead said.

The firefighter previously operated food businesses in Thamesford and Gooderham, and after some research, he made the decision to open a dedicated pizza and pasta shop in Haliburton village.

"I noticed this place for lease, and my oldest daughter's moving here. So it'll be something for her to kind of take over as well," he said. "And I just saw the need [for a pizza shop] based on the feedback from a little poll I did on Facebook, so it seemed like a good choice."

Muirhead said that after the hiring of an initial support team and a delivery driver, the high demand has created a need for more staff. He said he plans to hire at least one more kitchen staff member and another delivery driver.

While Haliburton Pizza Pasta Plus is officially open, the owner said that permanent signage is still pending. Temporary banners are currently in place until weather conditions allow for the installation of permanent building wraps.

The shop, located at 41 Maple Ave., is open Thursday through Sunday, and delivery is offered from 4 p.m. to close.

Highlander business

New therapy gets 'right to root of issue'

By Mike Baker

No matter how far gone someone may feel mentally, Minden-based psychotherapist Kelsey Sharpless believes there's always a way back.

Since opening her practice in 2022, Sharpless has worked with approximately 250 people, helping them through their struggles to establish a new baseline for their mental health.

She has a fresh tool in her arsenal after recently launching eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) therapy. The method was pioneered in the late 1980s by U.S. psychologist Dr. Francine Shapiro and has become a popular treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other ailments, Sharpless said.

"This is a very well-researched and validated therapy that helps people primarily recovery from trauma. The cool thing about EMDR is that it's so different to other therapies," she said. "It relies on a client's brain's natural ability to heal."

The EMDR International Association say the process involves communication between the amygdala – the alarm signal in the brain for stressful events; the hippocampus, which assists with learning, including memories about safety and danger; and the prefrontal cortex, which analyzes and controls behaviour and emotion.

It does not require patients talking in detail about the distressing issue, with Sharpless saying all she needs is a "headline", such as car accident or traumatic incident, to get people thinking.

Psychotherapist Kelsey Sharpless said EMDR therapy can help those with deep-rooted mental health issues. *Photo submitted.*

"They bring an image to mind and we work from there. Not having to talk about the incident can be really appealing to some people," she said.

As the name suggests, the therapy is all about movement, specifically bilateral stimulation.

"So, going back and forth from the left to right side of your body… it doesn't just need to be eye movements, it can also be things like tapping yourself left to right, using buzzers in your left and right hand or using sounds through headphones," Sharpless said.

Before utilizing EMDR, Sharpless said it's important to establish all stressors in someone's life. As well as traumatic memories, that also includes phobias and negative opinions about themselves. These bring on stress responses such as fight, flight or freeze, which create feelings of overwhelm, being back in the moment, or feeling frozen in time.

"EMDR therapy helps the brain process these memories and allows normal healing to resume. The experience is still remembered, but the response from the original event is resolved," Sharpless said.

She started training in EMDR in January and has already worked with a "handful" of her existing clients. As well as PTSD and childhood trauma, she said the method is also effective for helping with anxiety, depression, chronic pain, eating disorders and addiction.

Sessions last one hour, though Sharpless said the number people will need to see improvement varies case-by-case. She noted EMDR is known to help people in fewer sessions compared to other therapies, though.

"Just because it's very effective at getting right to the root of the issue," Sharpless said.

Mental health week

May 4 to 10 is 'Mental Health Week' in Ontario and Sharpless believes it's an important dedication given the rise in mental health crises since the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I'm glad it's at the forefront and is being talked about… there's a lot of people who are struggling. There are a lot of people reaching out for more help now, which is a great thing.

"It's important to continue the conversation… people do not need to feel shame for seeking out therapy. It's something everybody could use. We have all had distressing things happen to us in our lives. Sometimes it's helpful to talk about it," Sharpless said.

For more information, visit emdrcanada.ca.

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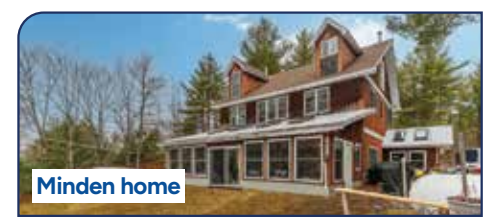

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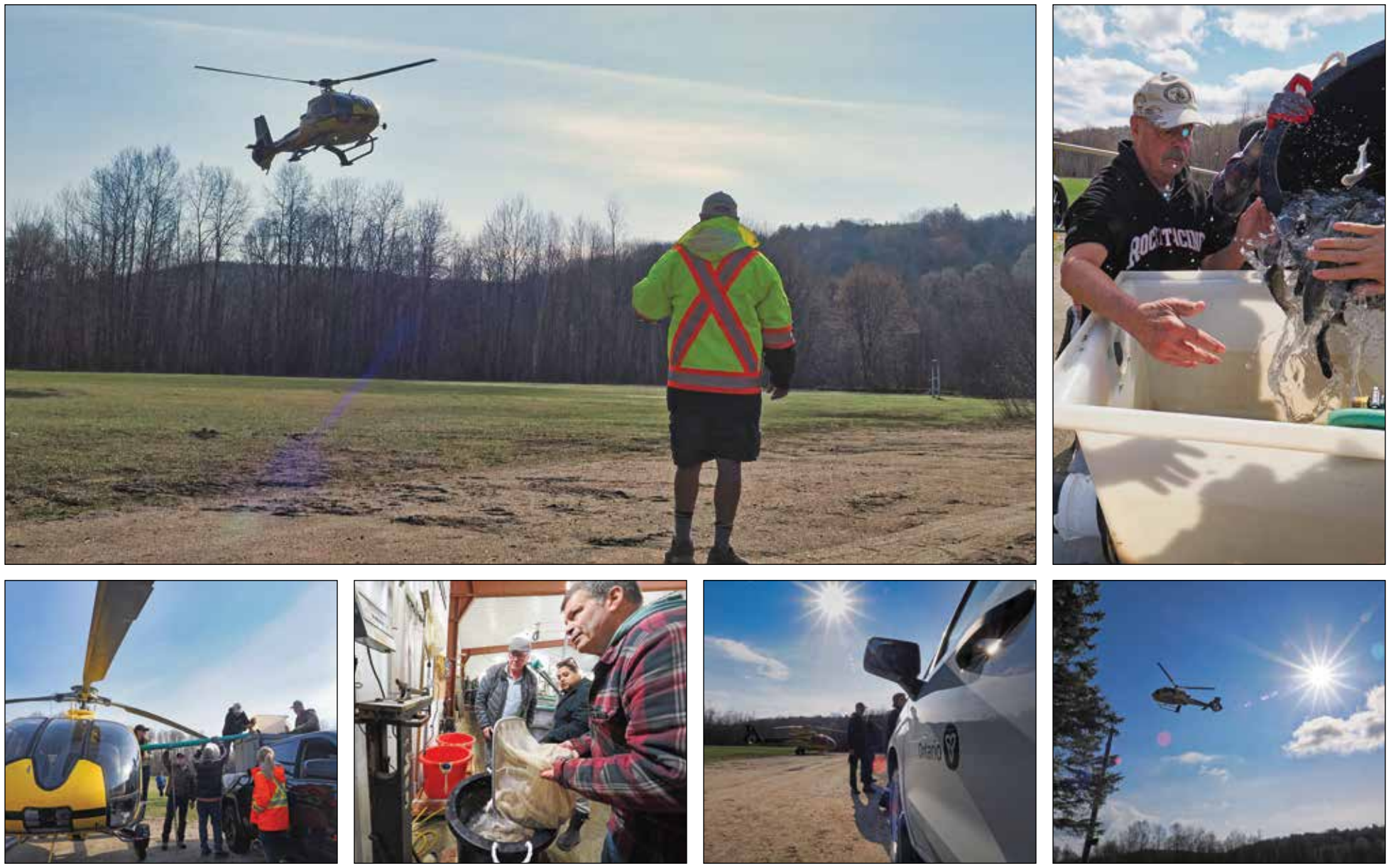
Highlander outdoors



Main: HHOA volunteer Dave Moss assists with the landing of MNRF helicopter. Top right: Moss loads fingerlings into the MNRF helicopter. Bottom right: Volunteers and MNRF crew members prepare to transfer thousands of fingerlings. Bottom second: HHOA president, Dan Smith, helps weigh the fingerlings. Bottom third: A MNRF vehicle and helicopter pictured at the Haliburton fish hatchery. Bottom right: A fully stocked MNRF helicopter takes off from the fish hatchery for its first airdrop. *Photos by Adam Frisk.*

Ministry choppers fish to new homes

By Adam Frisk
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Haliburton Highlands Outdoors Association (HHOA) began its annual stocking of the lakes throughout the County on Monday (May 4) with the help of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF).

Aerial fish stocking operations began early with a MNRF chopper conducting two runs to distribute thousands of fingerlings into remote local lakes. HHOA volunteers moved thousands of Haliburton gold lake trout, Manitou lake trout, and rainbow trout fingerlings from holding tanks at the fish hatchery during the process.

Following the helicopter drops, volunteers then used trailers and portable tanks to stock more accessible lakes throughout the County. HHOA president, Dan Smith, explained that this year's restocking campaign aimed to distribute about 25,000 fingerlings across the region.

"We'll just keep stocking fish until all the fingerlings are gone," Smith said. "That'll be it for our stocking of Haliburton County lakes for this season."

Once the community stocking for public lakes is finished, the association will focus on its commercial inventory by moving the rainbow trout currently held in the facility's pond to begin sales to private landowners and those with private bodies of water.

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Highlander community

Meeting local heroes

Members of Haliburton County Paramedic Service, municipal fire departments, and the Haliburton Highlands Ontario Provincial Police opened their doors to the public on May 1 to mark first responders day in the County, meeting with community members and showcasing just exactly what they do. Residents of all ages were invited to visit bases, halls, and stations throughout the County for a variety of activities and demonstrations.

Top: Justin Leavitt and his son, Lucas, sit in a fire truck at the Haliburton fire station. Middle: Bennett McGowan, 2, and Melissa Heisey high-five Haliburton County Paramedic Service deputy chief Wade MacPherson. Bottom: Firefighters demonstrate how to gain access to a heavily damaged vehicle using the jaws of life. *Photos by Adam Frisk.*

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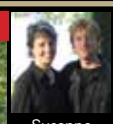

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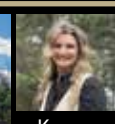

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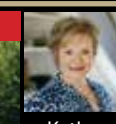

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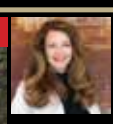

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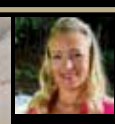

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Junior highlanders

ADVERTORIAL

The landscape where everyone's a winner

By Simon Payn

Last spring I installed a garden on top of a septic leach bed.

As you can see, the glamour of my life never ends. Hours were spent placing 1,200 small plants in little black plastic pots 12 inches apart. The site looked like a square of dots on clean light brown soil, alien amid the clearing in the trees.

After the plants were in the ground came the clearing up – 1,200 empty pots had to be put in the trunk of the car.

The clients wanted something other than grass on their septic – a bit of colour by the driveway and more nature at their cottage.

It was a part-shaded site on sandy soil, so I chose plants that matched the conditions.

The matrix layer – the layer of plants that ties together the design and acts as a groundcover – was made up of a species of sedge.

In clumps and drifts throughout the garden were flowering perennials that liked dry conditions and which didn't have deep roots that would disrupt the functioning of the septic. The plants were chosen so that together they would provide blooms throughout the growing season.

> Hours were spent placing 1,200 small plants in little black plastic pots 12 inches apart. The site looked like a square of dots on clean, brown soil.

I put the more aggressive spreaders next to each other so they would keep each other in check. Less aggressive plants were left solo because they wouldn't bother their neighbours.

Fungal business

Toby Kiers is an evolutionary biologist at Vrije University in Amsterdam who studies mycorrhizal fungi – the underground networks that connect plant roots. She won a "green Nobel" for her research that showed these networks aren't just passive plumbing.

The fungi, she found, are strategic traders. They send nutrients to plants that give them the most carbon in return. They withhold nutrients from plants that don't give much back. And they adjust what they do depending on competition from other fungi. They're selfish. But it works.

Kiers studied what happens with fungi. But the same thing happens when I design a landscape. Plants don't negotiate for themselves, they just follow their nature. So when I put them together, I create the cooperation fungi create.

When I chose plants for this septic bed, I found the kind of sedge and perennials that thrive in part-sun, sandy conditions of the septic bed and paired them by habit – aggressive with aggressive, gentle with gentle.

The narrow-leaf mountain mint is a picture of abundance. It provides food to scores of different insects, attracting pollinators for the other plants in the landscape. It grows vigorously but is kept in check by the spreading of the pearly everlasting. Together, each plant stops the other dominating.

The black-eyed Susans don't live long, but they seed like crazy, their offspring popping up on patches of bare soil, helping quickly cover the ground. These live-fast, die-young plants have a propagation strategy that works for them, but it also helps the overall ecosystem.

Growing together

I visited the site again later in the year. The sedges on the slope had started to fill in – each plant about twice its original size and much less bare soil.

The black-eyed Susans had finished flowering and were developing seed heads, ready to make new plants next year.

The pearly everlasting was in bloom – its flowers begin in August and stick around until the frost turns them crispy.

The mountain mint had added twice as many shoots, creating a feathery canopy over the matrix of sedges.

The site had started to look like a community instead of a collection of 1,200 individual plants, fresh out of their black plastic pots.

Simon Payn owns Grounded, which designs, installs and cares for ecological landscapes. Visit groundedgardens.ca.

Owning the stage

Haliburton Highlands Secondary School students brought Ray Bradbury's classic dystopian tale *Fahrenheit 451* to life last week at the Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion. The senior drama class, made up of 29 students, performed the iconic 1953 novel on April 30, May 1, and May 2, following weeks of rehearsal.

Top: Trevin Bain-Gross, who played the role of Guy Montag, opens the show. Middle: Alex Humphrey, who played Chief Beatty, Jax Bradley as fireman Henley, and Viliya Ianovskaia, who played Mrs. Hudson, performed during Friday's show. Bottom: Poppy Ellenberger-March, who played the role of Mildred, stays in character during Friday's performance. *Photos by Adam Frisk.*

Junior highlanders

Art for students' sake

The annual Haliburton Highlands Secondary School student exhibition opened at the Rails End Gallery and Arts Centre on May 1, showcasing the artwork created by this year's graduating class. More than 60 guests attended the opening of Limitless with the exhibit running until June 18.

Above: Student Electra Moshenko poses with her artwork.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Virtual Septic Re-inspection Information Session

The **Township of Minden Hills** will host a virtual information session regarding the **2026 Septic Re-inspection Program**. Residents and property owners are invited to learn about program requirements, inspection schedules, and homeowner responsibilities for the upcoming season.

- **Date:** Tuesday, May 12, 2026
- **Time:** 6:30 p.m.
- **Location:** Virtual (Online)

How to Participate:

Please email Claudia at mhsrp@mindenhills.ca for the meeting link and further details.

For questions, contact Claudia at the Township at **705-286-1260** EXT 517 or email.

Glebe Park Open House

Saturday, May 9, 10:00am–12:00pm

Great Hall, Fleming College Haliburton School of Art + Design

297 College Drive, Haliburton, ON, K0M 1S0

Join the Glebe Park and Museum Committee for a presentation on the developments and improvements in Glebe Park over the past years. Following the presentation, join us for short a tour to see what's new in the Park. Light refreshments served.

www.dysartetal.ca/explore-and-play

AVIS DE CANDIDATURE

Loi de 1996 sur les élections municipales (s. 32)

(*Please be advised this is the French language version of the Notice of Nomination for* French Language Public School Board Trustee – Counseiller(ère), Conseil scolaire Viamonde*)*

1 conseiller/ère scolaire francophone

Les candidats peuvent déposer leurs avis de candidature au poste de conseiller(ère) scolaire francophone lors des élections municipales et scolaires de 2026, qui représentera le secteur 1 et sera élu par tous les électeurs francophones de la région de Durham, les comtés d'Haliburton, de Northumberland et de Peterborough et les villes de Kawartha Lakes, Peterborough et Hastings en communiquant avec le secrétaire de la ville d'Oshawa, ou avec le secrétaire local/directeur du scrutin du comté de Haliburton aux coordonnées ci-dessous :

Canton d'Algonquin Highlands Directrice du scrutin – Dawn Newhook 1123 rue North Shore Algonquin Highlands (Ontario) K0M 1S0 Tél. : 705-489-2379 www.algonquinhighlands.ca dnewhook@algonquinhighlands.ca	**Municipalité de Dysart et al** Directrice du scrutin – Amanda Duncombe-Lee 135 avenue Maple, C.P. 389 Haliburton, (Ontario) K0M 1S0 Tél. : 705-457-1740 www.dysartetal.ca aduncombe-lee@dysartetal.ca
Municipalité de Highlands East Directrice du scrutin - Robyn Rogers 2249 rue Loop, C.P. 295 Wilberforce, (Ontario) K0L 3C0 Tél. : 705-448-2981 www.highlandseast.ca HEelection2026@highlandseast.ca	**Canton de Minden Hills** Directrice du scrutin - Vicki Bull 7 rue Milne, C.P. 359 Minden, (Ontario) K0M 2K0 Tél. : 705-286-1260 Sans frais : 1-844-277-1260 www.mindenhills.ca elections@mindenhills.ca

Les formulaires de candidature (formulaire 1) doivent être déposés, en personne ou par votre représentant, auprès du secrétaire/directeur du scrutin de la municipalité concernée durant les heures d'ouverture normales du 1er mai 2026 au jeudi 20 août 2026, et entre 9 h et 14 h le vendredi 21 août 2026 (jour de la nomination). Des frais de dépôt de 100 $ s'appliquent. Ils doivent être payés en liquidités, par débit ou par chèque ou mandat payables à l'ordre de la municipalité concernée.

Highlander events

5 Year Anniversary Open House

Thursday, May 7th 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

A special celebration as we mark this milestone with our community.

Snazzy Live Music, Sangria & Charcuterie!

1:00 – 2:00 p.m. Tours to discover all that we offer
2:00 – 4:00 p.m. Refreshments & Music

Our residents and passionate team can't wait to welcome you!
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Call to book a personal tour!

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GARDENS OF HALIBURTON

Saw that coming

Castle Antiques in Haliburton village transformed into a vibrant hub of healing and high energy on May 2, with The Wicked Wizard's Wife mystic market. Andrew and Jennifer Nowell hosted their second iteration of the psychic and wellness market with nearly 30 vendors and mediums in celebration of the grand opening of their shop that's nestled inside Castle.

Top: Andrew and Jennifer Nowell were all smiles during the grand opening of their shop. Bottom: Sarah Fraser poses for a photo with her tarot cards following a reading on Saturday. *Photos by Adam Frisk.*

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What's on

Moorelands Kids camp expands reach

By Adam Frisk
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Moorelands Kids camp attendees hold hands as they jump into Kawagama Lake. *(Submitted)*

For more than a century, Moorelands has helped thousands of children navigate the challenges of poverty, and the historic charity has set its sights on the "hidden pockets" of Haliburton County.

What began as a Toronto-based charity in 1912, serving low-income families, has since evolved into a youth-based leadership program. Since 1972, the organization has operated its flagship summer camp on the shores of Kawagama Lake in Dorset, and a new strategic plan is bridge-building across the corridor from Toronto to the County, to help ensure local families aren't left behind.

"We recognize that poverty is on the move," Colette Halferty, Moorelands Kids' director of development and communications, told *The Highlander*. "There are isolated rural communities that aren't getting served. We've really endeavoured to invest in more partnerships and outreach so we can reach families in need that aren't necessarily from the GTA."

Halferty explained that while the camp looks like any other classic Canadian summer retreat with archery, canoeing, and campfires, the fun is just the "icing on the cake.

"The curriculum is the foundational base of every activity and is the guiding principle for our staff mentors at camp to be able to make sure that our kids continue and they're having fun," she said.

The core of the Moorelands Kids camp leadership program is to equip the youth with the soft skills, emotional intelligence, resilience, and accountability that the school system often misses for children in high-stress environments, Halferty said.

"It's not like sitting in a classroom," she said. "If you're in a canoe, that's teamwork. If you're in a kayak, that's individual leadership. We define leadership not by a paycheque or status, but by being a person of positive influence."

Moorelands serves families on the Low-Income Cut-Off scale and helps to remove financial barriers through a subsidy program. Halferty explained that while it costs the charity about $1,780 to host one child for a week, covering transportation, food, lodging, and professional staffing, some families pay as little as $50 or $100 to send their child to camp for a week.

Putting the financial aspect aside, Moorelands helps address some of the specific hurdles faced by low-income youth. Halferty said frontline staff at the camp are certified in mental health training to support kids dealing with anxiety and depression. The camp also provides consistent, communal meals and has a 2-to-1 youth-to-counsellor ratio.

"Because we want to make sure that this journey and this experience for them is positive, that they can build up that sense of confidence themselves," Halferty said. "They know that someone has their back."

Last year, approximately 35 children from the County attended the camp. Through partnerships with the Haliburton County Development Corporation and the school board, Moorelands hopes to grow that number significantly.

"There is no cap on local kids," Halferty said. "It's first-come, first-served for families who meet the low-income criteria. We want more people to know this resource is accessible to them."

As the charity looks to the future, it is seeking both families who could benefit from the program and local philanthropists interested in supporting the organization. Those interested in learning more about Moorelands Kids camp or applying for financial assistance can visit moorelands.ca.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY DIAL 911 • AFTER-HOURS MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY DIAL 1-866-856-3247 • WWW.MINDENHILLS.CA

COUNCIL MEETINGS VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON

Council and Closed Session meetings are currently being conducted in-person (Council Chambers, 7 Milne St., Minden) and with electronic participation. The scheduled upcoming meetings are:

- May 14 – Regular Council Meeting
- May 28 – Regular Council Meeting

Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by attending in-person or via the live-stream link.

OUR FIRST HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE EVENT IS TAKING PLACE THIS MONTH

Safely dispose of your household hazardous waste at one of our Minden events:

- May 23
- July 25
- September 26

Residents can attend any hazardous waste event in the County. For a full list of events happening within the County, visit mindenhills.ca/hazardouswaste.

MINDEN HILLS CULTURAL CENTRE

- The MHCC will host a free screening of the award-winning documentary *The Colour of Ink* (2022) on Thursday, May 7 at 1:00 PM. Directed by Brian D. Johnson, the film follows Toronto ink maker Jason Logan as he creates rich, expressive inks from natural materials foraged from the wild. Exploring creativity, nature, and the enduring art of ink, the film traces how this ancient medium continues to inspire artists around the world. Presented in collaboration with the Haliburton County Public Library. Admission is free. No pre-registration is required.
- The UnFinished Objects (UFO) craft group will meet on Friday, May 8 from 1:00 to 3:00 PM. Join other local crafters in the Welch Room to work on your neglected projects. All are welcome.
- *Mute Eloquence of Light: Arctic Works* by Janet Read will be on display in the Agnes Jamieson Gallery until May 23. The exhibit features abstract paintings on linen, oil and acrylic works on panel, and mixed drawing–painting pieces, inspired by the artist's experiences in the Canadian Arctic and along Greenland's west coast. The Gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday, 10 am to 4 pm. Admission is by donation.

For information on all the programs and exhibits offered at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre: culturalcentre@mindenhills.ca or call 705-286-3763.

RIVERWALK CLEANUP EVENT

Join us for the Earth Day River Walk Clean Up on May 13th. To participate, please register by scanning the QR code.

SIGN UP AT THE S.G. NESBITT MEMORIAL ARENA

- New Breathwork class starting this week on Thursday May 7th at 10:00am. For more information or to register please visit our website at www.mindenhills.ca/recreation or visit or call the SG Nesbitt Memorial Arena Front Desk at (705) 286-1936 ext. 554.
- The next session of youth registered programs begins the week of May 17th. Sign up today online or in person at the SG Nesbitt Memorial Arena.

7 Milne Street, PO Box 359, Minden, ON, K0M 2K0 | Phone: 705-286-1260 · Toll Free 1-844-277-1260 · Fax: 705-286-4917
@Township.Minden.Hills Minden Hills@twpmindenhills @Township_MindenHills

What's on

Haliburton's Sharon Ferris (middle) has competed in 11 Ontario Summer Games. *Photo submitted.*

Walking into senior games with purpose

By Mike Baker

County resident Sharon Ferris said she found a new lease on life after deciding to join the Ontario Summer Games as an athlete back in 2015.

She was familiar with the annual event through her late husband, Frank, who competed across several sports for more than two decades. After years as a cheerleader in the stands, Ferris has become a key presence in walking and golf competition – locally here in the Highlands and on the provincial and national scene.

"I just love these games, they're always a wonderful opportunity to meet new people, expand your social circle and maintain a healthy, active lifestyle," Ferris said.

The games, open to anyone age 55 and older across Ontario, is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year and Ferris said there are lots of opportunities for Highlanders to get involved.

For those who enjoy more of a slow-pace, there's euchre, bid euchre, cribbage, darts, five-pin bowling and shuffleboard. For more active seniors, there's golf, pickleball, tennis and walking. Registration opened April 8, with some events getting underway this week.

Haliburton County falls within the Ontario Senior Games Association's (OSGA) district 11, with winners from local competition having the chance to compete provincially and nationally every other year.

Ferris said the next chance for upper-level competition is 2027, but getting involved now gives athletes a year to get up to speed.

"We have people who qualify for provincials and nationals every time they're open – I myself have been to every provincial competition for the past 11 years and have been to three national events, in Kamloops, B.C., Saint John, New Brunswick and Quebec," Ferris said.

The games have helped Ferris establish and build relationships with like-minded people across the country, while she's used prior national events to serve as a springboard for bigger getaways.

"When we went out to Saint John, we carried on and toured all through Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island, so it's a great way to see other parts of the country," she said.

To participate, people need an active OSGA membership, available online for $15, and then pay an additional $10 to enter district competition. One buy-in grants access to all senior games events, Ferris confirmed. Though there are additional fees for sports like golf, to cover round fees.

District 11 usually attracts more than 100 competitors, Ferris said. Numbers used to be higher pre-COVID, but the County resident said OSGA members are actively trying to boost interest.

While there's a huge social element to the events, and chances to work together as a team, Ferris said she really enjoys the individual competitiveness of walking. There are two distances used, either one-and-a-half kilometres or a three-kilometre route, with groups for those age 55-69 and 70-plus.

"It's prediction walking, so people have to guess how long it's going to take them to walk their route. And you have to do it twice," Ferris said. "I've walked with people before who have been a second or two off. There's a lot of preparation involved. I practice regularly – we're in it to win it."

Anyone interested in playing must register at least 24 hours before their chosen event. For more information, visit district11.osga55plus.ca or contact Jennifer Coates at 705-749-3787 or jennifercoates148@gmail.com.

Five-pin bowling
May 26, 1 p.m. at Minden Fast Lane Bowling

Bid euchre: closed

Cribbage
May 25, 1 p.m. at Gravenhurst Seniors Centre
May 28, 1 p.m. at Kinmount Legion.

Darts
May 16, 10 a.m. at Gravenhurst Seniors Centre

Euchre
May 11, 1 p.m. at Minden Curling Club
May 14, 1 p.m. at Gravenhurst Seniors Centre

Golf
June 3, 8:30 a.m. at Blairhampton Golf Course in Minden

Pickleball
June 9, 9 a.m. at S.G. Nesbitt Memorial Arena in Minden

Shuffleboard
June 4, 10 a.m. at Gravenhurst Seniors Centre

Tennis
June 16, 8 a.m. at Kerr Park in Bracebridge

Walking
May 29, 9 a.m. at Head Lake Park in Haliburton

What's on

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION EVENTS

Royal Canadian Legion - Branch 129 Haliburton

Mondays: Office open 9 a.m. to noon, clubroom closed. Bridge at 1 p.m., youth dart league (ages 10-18) 6:20 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Tuesdays: Cadets after school starts at 5 p.m., meeting starts at 6 p.m. Games and cards night starting at 6:30 p.m. All are welcome. Darts league 7 p.m. start.
Wednesdays: Bid euchre 1 p.m. start, Remembrance Hall. Bingo will resume in the spring.
Thursdays: General meeting third Thursday of the month, March to December; ladies auxiliary meeting last Thursday of the month, February to November.
Fridays: Meat draw, five draws, five prize each draw, first draw at 4:30 p.m., last draw at 6:30 p.m., tickets are $2 per draw; fun darts at 4:30 p.m. onwards; 50/50 draw at 5 p.m., tickets are $1 and available in the clubroom.
Saturdays: Open only for special events Clubroom hours: Monday 3-6 p.m., Tues 5-9 p.m., Wed/Thurs 3-6 p.m., Fri 3-7 p.m., Saturday/Sunday closed.

Royal Canadian Legion - Mabel D. Brannigan Branch 636 Minden

Lunch 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. **Monday to Thursday** with regular menu and daily special including Liver Lovers' **Tuesday**.
Friday Fish & Chips & Wings. Lunch 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and dinner 4-7 p.m.
Saturday all day breakfast 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with meat draws at 11 a.m.
Call ahead any day for take-out: 705-286-4541
Weekly activities:
Karaoke: call for dates
Monday: Rug Hookers every second week.
Monday: Euchre 1-3 p.m.
Thursday: Cribbage 1-3 p.m., Darts 7-9 p.m. and euchre 7-9 p.m.

Royal Canadian Legion - Branch 624 Wilberforce

Monday: open 7 to 10 p.m. Darts May 11, 18 and 25 at 7 p.m., $5 per player.
Tuesday: closed, special events only. Exercise club May 12, 19 and 26 at 1 p.m.
Wednesday: open 2 to 10 p.m. Darts May 13, 20 and 27 at 2 p.m.; quick supper from 5 to 6:30 p.m.; cribbage at 6:30 p.m.
Thursday: open 2 to 10 p.m. May 12 and 28 HHHS social recreation at 10 a.m.
Friday: open 2 to 11 p.m. May 15 and 29 is fish and chips from 5 to 8 p.m.; May 8 and 22 is community care lunch at noon and wings and jam session from 5 to 8 p.m.
Saturday: open 2 to 9 p.m. May 16 Lou Moody Fishing Derby 3 to 5 p.m., karaoke 8 p.m. to midnight; May 23 is honours and awards at 11 a.m.; May 30 is trivia at 7 p.m.
Sunday: closed, special events only.

Royal Canadian Legion – Branch 566 Cardiff

Hours: **Sunday and Monday** 3 to 6 p.m. and Thursday 3 to 9 p.m.
Events: Breakfast on the first **Sunday** of each month from 9 to 11 a.m.; euchre on the second **Sunday** of each month at 12:30 p.m.
Shuffleboard every **Thursday** from 7 to 9 p.m.
Music and jam session ever second **Saturday** of the month from 1 to 4 p.m. Everyone welcome.

EVENTS

May 8, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Minden Health Care Auxiliary is running an end of season sale at the gift shop outside Hyland Crest long-term care home at 6 McPherson St. There will be clothes, purses, jewellery and more. Also running May 15.

May 8, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friendship Fri-YAYs are back at Walkabout Farm Therapeutic Riding Association. Swing by the farm at 1105 Spring Valley Road in Minden for welcoming time with horses, nature walks, arts and crafts and connection with friends, both old and new. Runing every Friday through summer, weather permitting.

May 9, 10 a.m. to noon. The Haliburton Highlands Land Trust invites the public to Barnum Creek Nature Reserve for its upcoming 'spring wildflowers and leeks' Discovery Days event. Led by Michele Swyer. Pre-registration required at www.haliburtonlandtrust.ca. Admission by donation.

May 9, 10 a.m. to noon. Haliburton litter clean-up at Head Lake Park. Organized by Environment Haliburton! Gloves and bags provided. Rain date is May 16.

May 9, 7 p.m. Bingo at the Lloyd Watson Centre in Wilberforce. Back by popular demand. Cash prizes, including a $500 jackpot. Presented by the Wilberforce Agricultural Fair, with proceeds supporting the youth ambassador program. Must be 18 or older to play. Cash only. Doors open at 6 p.m.

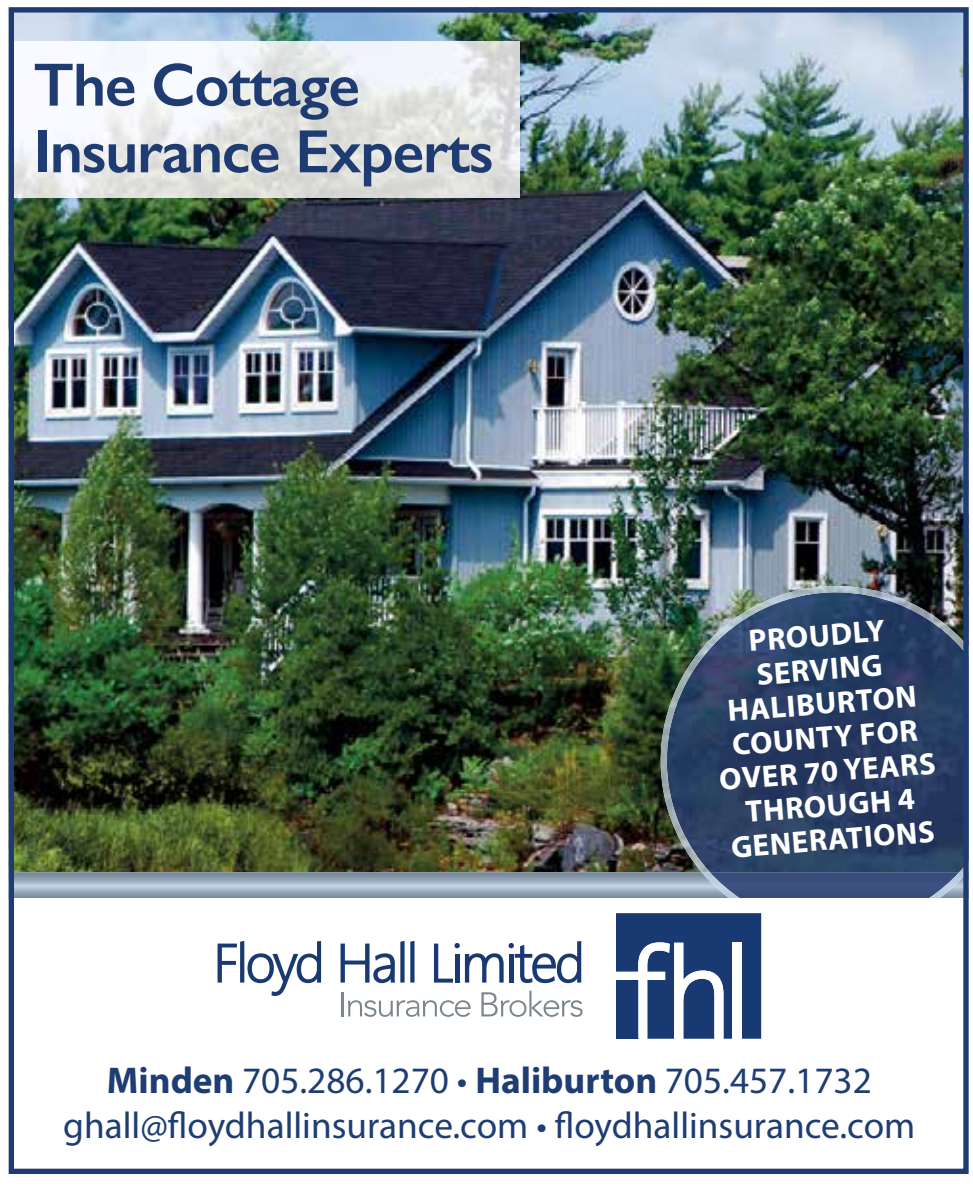
May 10, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. SIRCH Repair Café returns, running at the bistro and bakery located at 49 Maple Ave. in Haliburton. From small appliances to household items, volunteer fixers will do their best to help bring things back to life. Running every second Sunday of the month until October.

May 11, 7 to 8:30 p.m. Stanhope Fire Fighters Community Hall, Algonquin Highlands. The final 'voices and votes session, Understanding campaigns: how success happens' will feature Lauren Hunter, a seasoned campaign strategist of more than 20 municipal, provincial, and federal campaigns, sharing the building blocks of a successful campaign, whether that's for elected office or for a cause people care about, along with practical tips and tools.

May 11, 7 to 9 p.m. The Baha'i community of Haliburton County is hosting a community coffee house at the Haliburton Legion. Dr. Norm Bottum will present about 'maintaining a healthy body and mind as we age'. Music by the Northern Wildflowers Sue Shikaze and Myrna McBrien. No admission. Light refreshments available.

May 12, 7 p.m. Your garden is buzzing. Please join the Minden & District Horticultural Society at the Minden Community Centre, 55 Parkside St., Minden. Learn about "The Bee Project – Native Bees" from guest speaker Cheryl Fraser, followed by the monthly society meeting. New members welcome.

May 13, 7 p.m. Telling Our Stories Speaker Series welcomes Mandy Shintani and Susan Yatabe to the Highlands to present 'The Samurai in Our Closet' featuring untold stories of their Japanese-Canadian family's experiences before and during the Second World War. At the Haliburton Legion. Admission is $15, pre-registration recommended by contacting Barrie Martin at 705-457-7557 or barrieinthehighlands@gmail.com.



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HELP WANTED

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highlandseast.ca

Due to a pending retirement, the Municipality of Highlands East is currently seeking candidates for the position of:

Full-Time, Building and Planning Assistant
Building Department

Current Rate of Pay per CUPE Local 4416 Collective Agreement:
$29.02/hour
Hours of Work: 35 hours/week

Reporting to the Chief Building Official, the successful candidate shall provide administrative and clerical support to the Building Department, by assisting with various administrative duties to ensure effective and efficient operations.

To apply you must possess:

- Completion of secondary education with up to one (1) year of vocational training or equivalent.
- Valid Class G Driver's License.
- One (1) year progressive experience as clerical/administrative support within a Municipal Building and Planning department or equivalent.
- Proficiency in computer applications (including but not limited to Microsoft Office Suite, Outlook and Municipal-specific software programs).
- General understanding of the Ontario Building Code Act and other applicable legislation including municipal Official Plans and Comprehensive Zoning Bylaws.
- Excellent organizational and record-keeping skills with keen attention to detail.
- Ability to communicate accurately and effectively both orally and in writing.
- Highly motivated to work both independently and in a team environment, with minimal supervision.
- Establish and maintain respectful and effective working relationships with others.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality where mandated or required.

A copy of the detailed job posting, and description are available upon request or on the Highlands East website at www.highlandseast.ca

If you are interested in joining our dedicated team of municipal professionals, applications **clearly marked "Application – Full-Time, Building and Planning Assistant"** may be submitted on or before 12:00 p.m, Monday, May 11th, 2026 via email, mail, in person, or fax. Interested applicants may submit their resume, including references, in confidence to:

Tracy Vader, HR/Payroll Coordinator
Municipality of Highlands East
P.O. Box 295, 2249 Loop Road
Wilberforce, ON K0L 3C0
E-Mail: humanresources@highlandseast.ca

We thank all applicants for their interest but only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

The Municipality of Highlands East is an equal opportunity employer. Applicants requiring accommodation are asked to contact the HR/Payroll Coordinator.

In accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the information gathered will be used solely for candidate selection purposes only. Questions about this collection should be directed to Tracy Vader, HR/Payroll Coordinator.

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HALIBURTON COUNTY

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- HVAC tech OBT2 or OBT1 licenses

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Please forward a resume or feel free to call or drop in to meet us!

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In every long weekend copy of The Highlander.

Highlander classifieds

HELP WANTED

blackrock landscapes

NOW HIRING

Job Site Crew

Experience in landscaping, gardening, carpentry and stonework an asset, but not necessary. Must have own transportation.

AZ Truck Driver

Must have experience and clean driving record. Must have experience with trailers. Loading machines is an asset.

Email resume to:
info@blackrocklandscapes.ca
tel: 705-457-4574
By appointment only

Township of Algonquin Highlands requires a

Deputy Clerk

The Township of Algonquin Highlands is seeking applications from qualified individuals for the permanent, full-time position of Deputy Clerk.

Algonquin Highlands offers a competitive salary, compressed workweek, excellent benefits package, Health and Wellness opportunities and enrollment in OMERS Pension Plan. Join a dedicated team that strives to make us the best place to live, work and play.

Visit our website at: www.algonquinhighlands.ca for the complete job description.

Qualified candidates are invited to submit a cover letter and resume by **3:00 p.m. on Friday, May 8, 2026** to:

Dawn Mugford-Guay
Human Resources Coordinator
Township of Algonquin Highlands
1123 North Shore Road
Algonquin Highlands, ON K0M 1S0
Email: dmugfordguay@algonquinhighlands.ca

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sherri@cottagecountrypaving.ca

WANTED

WANTED ANTIQUES

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BOOKKEEPER - If your bookkeeper is hard to reach...Blackline Books – Haliburton Servicing Trades | Cleaners /Rental Hosts. Cleanup, catch-up & monthly bookkeeping Fast replies. Clean books. No nonsense. blacklinebookshali@gmail.com

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PAINTER - Professional, experienced, and dependable painter available for residential and commercial projects — from a single room to an entire home or office. Minor repairs included at no additional charge. Decks! Power washed and stained. Call or text 647-213-2875 for a free estimate or call 705-447-2213

FOR SALE

FOR SALE – GUILFORD FIREWOOD – Nicely cut and split, ready to burn. $140. per face cord – pick up. Delivery available, call 705-754-3034

FOR SALE – CANOE, 13 – 14 ft Yellow Cottage Canoe, with 2 paddles, excellent condition. In Haliburton. $225. Call 613-332-3580

YARD SALE

MULTI FAMILY YARD SALE – 1297 Hunter Creek Rd, Minden. Saturday, May 9th from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, May 10th from 8 a.m. to 12 noon. Lots of bargains, TV, kids toys, household items and much more!

MULTI FAMILY YARD SALE – 65 Mulholland Drive, Haliburton. Saturday, May 16th & Sunday, May 17th from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Cottage Canoe, Vintage household furniture, steamer truck, pressback chairs, turntable, vinyl LP's, cranberry glass, antique floral oil lamp. Lots of Nics & Nacs. Even homemade Butter Tarts

YARD SALE

MOVING SALE – 421 Mountain Street, Haliburton Saturday, May 9th & Sunday, May 10th from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Assorted small household items, some furniture, rubber stamping & craft supplies, small tools, everything priced to sell. Cash Only.

MOVING SALE – 4177 Kennisis Lake Road, Haliburton. Saturday, May 16th & Sunday, May 17th from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Furniture, tools, household, antiques, fishing boat, 5th wheel trailer, men's bike, tool cabinet, pet stuff, bike racks, wedding stuff & chicken coup stuff.

WANTED

PROFESSIONAL seeks office space with internet in Minden area from May 15, 2026 to October 15, 2026. Contact joerich.ca@gmail.com

J & D TOWING & SERVICE STATION - will pay top dollar for scrap cars. We also provide towing services as well as flat bed. Call Jim 705-447-2113

WANTED

WANTED – Scrap metal, fridges, stoves, any metal. We will pick up. Please call 519-820-5701 this is a Gooderham phone number.

HELP WANTED

NORTH STEEL is looking to hire a fulltime welder for our shop in Minden. Our shop is operational Monday to Friday. We are looking to hire a welder with experience. Benefits are available after 3 month probationary period. If interested Please email your resume to scott.alexander@northsteel.ca

NOTICE

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS MEETINGS - Sundays - 10:30 am at St. Anthony's, 27 Victoria Street Haliburton. Thinking about alcohol. Thinking about stopping. We've been there. We can help!

NOTICE

AL ANON- WE CARE, are you troubled by someone's drinking? Meetings: Thursdays 7 p.m., St. Anthony's 27 Victoria Street, Haliburton, and Mondays 7 p.m. at Highland Hills United Church, 21 Newcastle, Rear Entrance, Minden. 1-888-4AL-ANON (1-888-425-2666) al-anon.org All are welcome.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS Admission is free and the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using. This meeting is for addicts only. New meeting in Haliburton that meets every Thursday from 7:30-8:30 p.m. at 83 Maple Ave. Unit 7A in Haliburton Halco Plaza, behind Castle Antiques. For more information and an online version visit www.cloana.org or call 1-888-811-3887

Highlander classifieds

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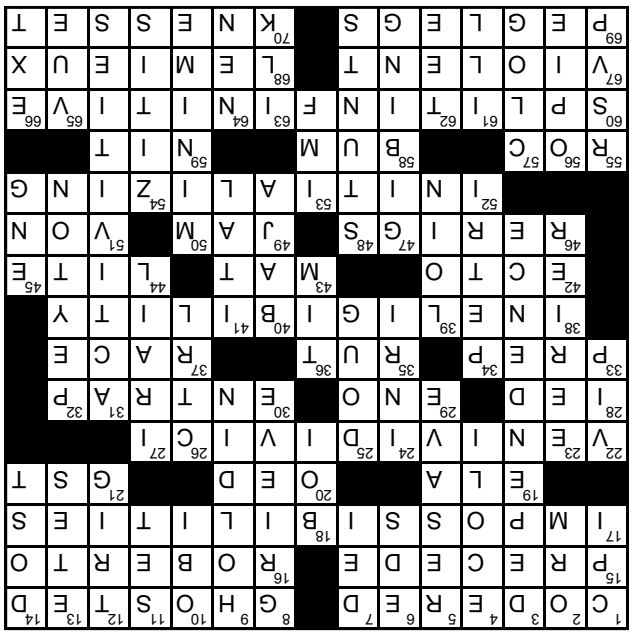

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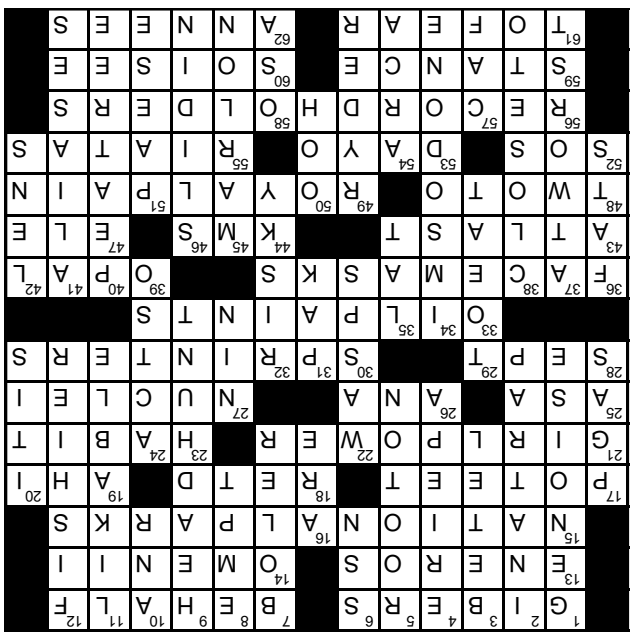
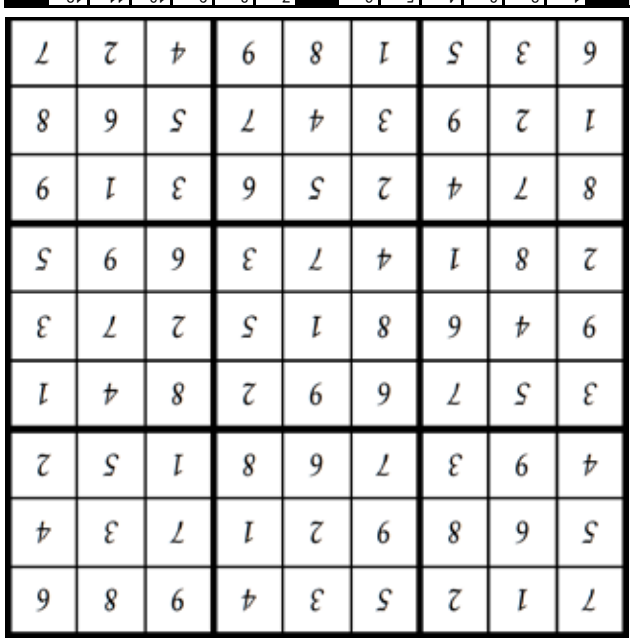




OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory of

Joyce Marguerite Sisson

(nee Clarke)

Joyce Marguerite Sisson, nee Clarke, passed away peacefully at the age of 100 at the Kingsway Place retirement home in Aurora, Ontario on November 26, 2025.

Joyce, was the loving daughter of Norman and Evelyn Clarke, of Toronto, sister of Noreen Hunwicks, nee Clarke,

deceased, wife of Bernard (Bern) Sisson of West Guildford, Ontario, who predeceased her in 2006, beloved mother of only son Craig, grandmother to Craig's spouse Lynn and Craig's children, Carleigh and Reid of Toronto, great-grandmother to Carleigh's children, Weston and Audrey, and aunt to her nieces, Audra Hunwicks of Montreal and Donna Hunwicks-Hopper of Dieppe, New Brunswick. She was also aunt to the many nieces and nephews of Bern's extended Sisson family in West Guilford, Ontario.

Joyce's life will be celebrated at St. Georges Anglican Church in Haliburton, Ontario on Saturday, May 16, 2026 at 1:30 pm. Interment to follow at St. Peter's Cemetery.

www.gordonmonkfuneralhome.com

www.gordonmonkfuneralhome.com

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Thomas Byng

Celebration of Life

Family and friends are warmly invited to gather and celebrate Thomas. He was known for his steady positivity and for always finding the good in a moment. Thomas passed peacefully at home on March 8.

This will be a time to reflect, reconnect, honour the life he lived, and celebrate a man who has left a profound impact on many. The evening will be full of quiet moments, big energy, meaningful conversations, and genuine laughter.

We'll share music, stories, and memories throughout the evening, to celebrate the spirit and connection Thomas brought into our lives.

All who feel a connection to Thomas are welcome.

Belcroft Estate, Gilford
Saturday, June 27 at 5:00 pm
RSVP by May 26 to Cathy
416-801-8166 or cathy.cmsolutions@gmail.com

Congratulations to Debbie Ervine for capturing this incredible cover shot!

And thank you to everyone who submitted. You might find your photos inside. Be sure to take a look!

Watch for your

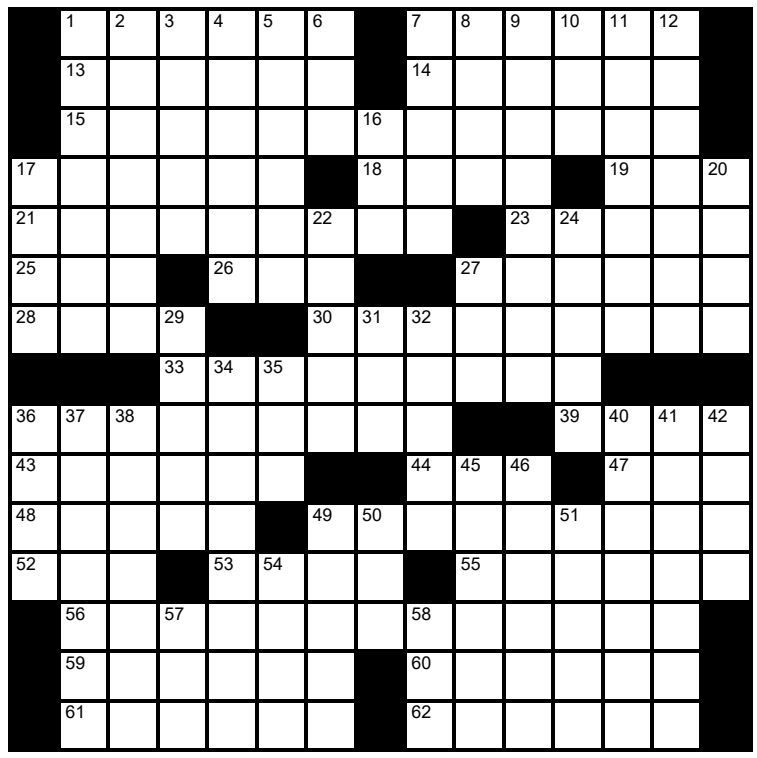
Highlander Handbook

in next week's edition of The Highlander

Highlander puzzles

And That's Vinyl!

by Barbara Olson
© ClassiCanadian Crosswords



Across

1 Mocking types
7 Representation for
13 Ano openers
14 "Damien" sequel subtitle
15 *Banff, Jasper and Wood Buffalo, e.g.
17 "Designing Women" character B.J. ___
18 Finally off the 9 to 5: Abbr.
19 Bigeye or yellowfin
21 *'90s slogan for young feminists
23 "Sister Act" attire
25 Quick-wink link
26 "50 Shades of Grey" protagonist
27 Cell centres
28 Labour Day mo.
30 They're on the fast track
33 *Materials for Rembrandt
36 Masquerade party wear
39 Milky gem
43 "Finally!"
44 Odometer units, for short
47 Spanish letter after ka
48 It takes ___ tango
49 *Major hassle
52 Brillo rival
53 "Banana Boat Song" refrain
55 Dogie catchers
56 Guinness book people, or literally, the answers to the starred clues
59 Driver's position, in golf
60 "It appears that way"
61 "The only thing we have ___... ": F.D.R.
62 Spans of 365 jours

Down

1 Rich Italian cake
2 Snared
3 Asian palm nut
4 Great Lake city across from St. Thomas, ON
5 Cheer for
6 U.S. worker's ID
7 Compact Canadian-made trailer brand
8 Pre-___ (replace)
9 Scout out recruits
10 "Gimme ___!" (start of a Riverdale cheer)
11 Easy to get along with
12 Seeming less legit
16 "___ you for real?!"
17 Major golf tourneys
20 "___ what ___ "("C'est la vie")
22 Narrow-waisted stingers
24 "Don't ___ innocent!"
27 Diarist Anaïs
29 "Do I dare ___ a peach?" (T.S. Eliot)
31 Afgh.'s neighbour
32 Like working without a net
34 "That's enough for me!"
35 Long. opposite
36 Pool pro Minnesota
37 Least optimally
38 Tight with
40 Legume-bearing plant
41 A.k.a. names
42 Eye contact?
45 Actor Brando
46 Came home amid a cloud of dust
49 "Weak in the Knees" singer Serena
50 "Impressive!"
51 Bel ___ (soft cheese)
54 Ancient chest
57 Campus dining area, casually
58 Mexican mama bear

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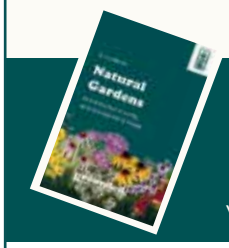

For a free guide to natural gardens in Haliburton County, visit groundedgardens.ca.

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5			9				3	
								2
	5	7	6		2	8	4	
9					5		7	
			4					
8							1	
	2			4	7			
			1		9			7

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HIGHWAY 35, MINDEN $999,900

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GOODERHAM LAKE $925,000

BED 5+1 | BATH 4.5 | MLS #X12954018

LONG LAKE, MINK RD $749,900

BED 6 | BATH 2 | MLS #X13034386

KUSHOG LAKE, HWY 35 $499,900

BED 4 | BATH 2 | MLS #X12604142

BOUGHNER RD $199,900

ACRES 5.5 | MLS #X13061996

EVERY SALE HAS A STORY

Linda and her team provided excellent pricing, sales, and marketing advice. They did their research as to the current market and helped us arrive at an aspirational but realistic price. Their assistance in presenting the property was fabulous and we sold within a week of posting

-R. Blickstead, Google Review

A big thank you goes to Linda Baumgartner and her team for their expert advice and service. Linda was a pleasure to work with and was professional and knowledgeable in handling the sale of our cottage. We can fully endorse Linda Baumgartner and her team for their integrity, honesty and commitment to our sale.

-S. Webb, Google Review

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